

CHILD PROTECTION

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY for DOWNSIDE SCHOOL

Contents	Page
Introduction	2
School Child Protection Policy	3-5
Roles and Responsibility of Designated Child Protection Person	5
1. Policy on Child Abuse	6
2. Procedures	7-8
3. Allegations involving Sexual Impropriety	9
4. Staff Code of Conduct	10-11
5. Procedure for Reporting Concerns	12
6. What to do if a child tells / Confidentiality	13
7. First Aid after Disclosure	14
Appendix 1 The Children Act	15
Appendix 2 Safeguarding and ICT (Cyber-bullying)	17-22
Appendix 3 Somerset County Council and Young People's Directorate Eligibility Criteria	23-25
Appendix 4 Allegation Management	26-28
Appendix 5 Worries and Complaints – A Pupil's Guide	29-30

CHILD PROTECTION AT DOWNSIDE SCHOOL

In all cases of actual or suspected abuse our Designated Child Protection person must be informed and the South West Child Protection Procedures followed – these are online procedures, which are regularly updated. Key staff should upload this website to their desktop for instant access.

www.swcpp.org.uk

The Designated Child Protection Person will inform the Head Master of all cases of actual or suspected abuse. The only exception to this would be if the Head Master were implicated in the concerns, in which case the Chair of Governors would be informed.

Mr Andrew Hobbs is the Designated Child Protection Person (CPP) at Downside School.

Mr André Gushurst-Moore is the Deputy Child Protection Person (DCPP) at Downside School.

Lady Rees-Mogg is the Governor with responsibility for Child Protection at Downside School.

See Appendix 1

**ALL SCHOOL STAFF SHOULD KNOW
WHERE THEY CAN ACCESS THIS CHILD
PROTECTION GUIDANCE**

DOWNSIDE SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Downside School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Whilst we strive to minimise risk, we are fully aware that child protection risk cannot be eliminated.

Our policy applies to all staff and governors working for and on behalf of the School and is available to parents on request. There are five main elements to our policy:

- Establishing a positive, supportive, secure environment in which children can learn and develop, together with a School ethos, which promotes, in all pupils, a sense of being valued.
- Ensuring we practise safer recruitment in checking the suitability of all staff to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe through the content of the curriculum.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.

We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. Downside School will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in Downside School whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families to:

- Ensure we have a Designated Senior Person and an assistant for child protection who have received appropriate training and support for this role (currently Andrew Hobbs and Andre Gushurst Moore). Training in child protection and inter-agency working is carried out every two years for the designated person and his assistant.
- Ensure we have a Nominated Governor responsible for child protection. The Governing Body undertakes an annual review of the child protection policy and procedures and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.
- Ensure safer recruitment practices are always followed, including enhanced Criminal Record Bureau checks. Andrew Hobbs has been trained in Safer Recruitment

- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governing body knows the name of the Designated Senior Person responsible for child protection and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the Designated Senior Person responsible for child protection. Through regular staff training we will foster a culture of mutual respect between pupils and members of staff, with adults modelling good practice in this context. Training in child protection is provided every three years for the Head Master and all staff. All part-time and voluntary staff are made aware of the arrangements for child protection.
- Notify Children’s Social Care if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is in receipt of a child protection plan.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- Follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff. Ensure that there are procedures to deal with allegations not only against members of staff but also against volunteers or the Head Master; in the case of an allegation against the Head Master, the chairman of Governors should be informed.
- Notify the DCSF and/or any other designated authority (e.g. the Independent Safeguarding Authority) within one month when the services of a person are discontinued because he or she was considered unsuitable to work with children.
- Carry out appropriate checks on staff with a different employer looking after the school’s pupils on a site other than the school.
- Ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.

The Children Act (1989) and Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007) state that the “welfare of the child is paramount”. This means that considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

We recognise that children who suffer any form of abuse may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at School their behaviour may be challenging or they may be withdrawn. In such cases, we will liaise with other agencies that support the pupil such as Children’s Social Care, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, Education Welfare Service and Educational Psychology

Service. We will also ensure that, where a pupil in receipt of a child protection plan, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

Downside School's policies on Bullying and Cyber-bullying are to be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy. Any serious bullying concerns will be referred to the Child Protection Person and appropriate action will be taken (see Procedure for dealing with Bullying / Cyber-bullying incidents).

(See Appendix 2)

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Child Protection Person (CPP)

Downside School has a Designated Child Protection Person who is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children (currently Andrew Hobbs)

Role of the designated person is to:

1. recognise how to identify signs of abuse and know which outside child protection agency to contact in the event of a child protection matter coming to his/her attention;
2. ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover;
3. liaise with local Children's Social Care and other agencies, as appropriate;
4. act as a source of advice and expertise and keep relevant people within the School informed about any action taken and any further action required
5. ensure that a proper record is kept of any referral and action taken, and that this is kept safely and in confidence, and
6. manage and deliver staff child protection training and review the operation of the Child Protection Policy annually to ensure the procedures are working and that it complies with current best practice.

Responsibilities for all staff:

Staff have an obligation to report all suspicions of abuse to the Child Protection Person, (or the Deputy Child Protection Person in their absence), who will then inform the Head Master. The Head Master will inform the Governor with responsibility for child protection (currently Lady Gillian Rees-Mogg). If the allegation involves any of the persons named here, the member of staff should report to one of the other designated persons.

It then becomes the responsibility of the Child Protection Person, working with the Head Master, to pass these concerns on to Children's Social Care.

This is an inescapable, personal and professional responsibility by all staff for the protection of children from harm.

1. POLICY ON CHILD ABUSE

(a) Introduction

All members of the School staff should be alert to the possible signs of abuse of a pupil. Abuse may take several forms, which are not mutually exclusive:

Physical Abuse results from acts or omissions by others, which cause injury to the child. Bruises, burns, scalds, abrasions should be of concern to staff, who should also be alert of the rare possibility of fabricated or induced illness.

Neglect involves persistently not providing the basic necessities: food, warmth, shelter, caring supervision or reasonable cleanliness.

Emotional Abuse, which is harder to detect or define, may result from locking the child away, conveying to a child they are worthless, excessive shouting, teasing or humiliation, the denial of love, affection, interest or friendship, over-protection so as to deny the child the normal experiences of life.

Sexual Abuse is the involvement of emotionally immature young people in sexual activity with an adult or significantly older person to which they cannot give informed consent or which breaks social taboos.

There will be other circumstances, not amounting to abuse, which give cause for serious concern about the welfare of pupils. Questions of the young person being in moral danger, being uncared for, engaging in antisocial or inappropriate behaviour and so on may be referred to the Designated Child Protection Person, who will discuss the matter with the Head Master, and through them, as necessary, to Children's Social Care. Such cases may also be referred to the Health Centre, and through them to Children's Social Care. In each case the School's Child Protection Person must be informed.

(See Appendix 3)

2. PROCEDURES

(a) **Cases where abuse may have been inflicted by parents or carers**

- (i) Suspicion or knowledge of abuse must be reported to the Child Protection Person or Deputy who will share such information with the Head Master or the relevant House Staff of the pupil concerned.
- (ii) Any adult to whom abuse is reported by a pupil has a duty to listen to the pupil, to provide reassurance, and subsequently to record the pupil's statements. He / she must not press the pupil, ask probing questions or suggest answers. The situation should then be reported and discussed with the Child Protection Officer, who will consult with the Head Master. The online South West Child Protection Procedures must be referred to at all stages (www.swcpp.org.uk)
- (iii) Expert diagnosis may be required quickly. The Child Protection Officer, their assistant or the Head Master will arrange this.

(b) **Cases where abuse may have been inflicted by staff or volunteers**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer it must be responded to; there is an obvious need to act immediately and with **utmost discretion**. The informant should be told that the matter will be referred in confidence to the appropriate people. This must be done, and the written record passed on the same day to the Child Protection Person and the Head Master.

The circumstances should be kept **strictly confidential** until the Head Master has been able to judge whether or not an allegation or concern indicates possible abuse. The next step is always to discuss the situation with the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (for Allegations Management)

If it is decided, by the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), that an investigation is called for, it is the responsibility of the Children's Social Care manager to arrange a meeting (called a Strategy Meeting) to discuss how the next steps are handled. This would normally involve the Police, Children's Social Care, the Designated Child Protection Person, the Head Master and preferably a member of the Governing Body of the School. The arrangements agreed upon will include informing the parents and seeking their consent for any immediate medical examination.

The staff member against whom the allegation is made would normally be informed as soon as possible after the result of the initial investigation is known or the decision is made to dispense with one, but would not be invited to make a response. There should be a warning that anything said will be recorded.

If it is established that the allegation is not well founded, either on the basis of the medical evidence or further statements, then the person against whom the complaint has been made would normally be informed that the

matter is closed.

If the Police/Children's Social Care decide to take the case further and the allegation is against a member of staff, he / she should normally be suspended or, where the circumstances are considered to warrant it, dismissed. It is reasonable to ask the Police to give some indication of their timescale. There have been cases where the period of suspension has been unacceptably long.

There is understandable concern amongst many teachers that careers may be irreparably damaged by flimsy or malicious allegations by children. This is actually extremely rare, though some incidents do end up only as "unproven" one way or the other which is generally unsatisfactory. It is always better for a school to anticipate possible risks and to seek to prevent all reasonable risk of misunderstandings and false allegations. Proper policy and procedures are also likely to deter any individual seeking to use the school as a basis for inappropriate relationships with pupils; the staff "Code of Conduct" may be helpful. This will help staff to know what behaviours are generally considered to be inconsistent with their professional status. Infringements should then be subject to disciplinary procedures as required.

(c) Cases where abuse may have been inflicted by the Head Master

If an allegation or complaint is made against the Head Master, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors, or in his absence Lady Gillian Rees-Mogg, without first notifying the Head Master.

(d) Cases where abuse may have been inflicted by a pupil

A student against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation and the School's Behaviour Policy will apply. The School will take advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all students involved including the student or students accused of abuse. If it is necessary for a student to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of abuse, the School will ensure that, subject to the advice of the LADO, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the student is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult. In the case of students whose parents are abroad, the student's Guardian will be requested to provide support to the student and to accommodate him/her if it is necessary to suspend him/her during the investigation.

(e) Complaint or Allegation?

It is important to draw a distinction between complaints and allegations against staff. In other words, the difference between behaviours that suggest misconduct or unprofessionalism, and those which specifically raise child protection concerns.

Any concern which involves the possibility of physical, emotional or sexual abuse will **always** be discussed with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and their advice taken. If child protection procedures are needed, an investigation will be carried out by Children's Social Care and the Police, as happens with any other referral. The Designated Lead Person, the Head Master and Governors **must not** carry out investigations themselves in these circumstances. They will be invited to a Strategy Meeting at a very early stage.

(See Appendix 4)

Decisions about suspension and the use of disciplinary procedures are for the Head Master and Governors alone, but action may need to be co-ordinated where there is a wider investigation involving Children's Social Care and/or the Police.

3. ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING SEXUAL IMPROPRIETY

Whenever a member of staff is informed by a pupil of an event involving sexual impropriety of any kind, whether between pupils or staff and pupils, the following steps should be taken:

- (i) Listen sympathetically and afterwards briefly note the content of what was disclosed, sign and date it.
- (ii) Contact the Child Protection Person immediately, who will discuss with the Head Master and the LADO whether Children's Social Care should be notified.
- (iii) If they are notified and it is agreed that the school alone should follow up the issue, the Child Protection Officer will interview the complainant and report as quickly as possible to the Head Master, who will oversee the disciplinary aspects of the enquiry;
- (iv) If Children's Social Care seeks further investigations, they will themselves open an enquiry. In these circumstances, our own disciplinary enquiry will be suspended until cleared by the Children's Social Care. This would normally involve the Police and Designated Person and the Head Master.

This policy should be implemented regardless of whether the complainant is over or under 16. Parents should be informed as soon as a referral to Children's Social Care has been made by the Child Protection Person, **unless to do so would put the pupil at greater risk of harm.** If there is any doubt, the DPP will consult with the Police/Children's Social Care beforehand.

4. STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Cordial relations between teaching staff and pupils are at the heart of a happy and thriving school. At the same time, in the interests of all parties, professional boundaries must be observed.

Over-familiarity, however well intentioned, can lead to serious moral and legal complications. Since the implementation of the Children Act, the number of complaints against members of the teaching profession has risen sharply.

We must all be aware of the possibility of accusations and try to avoid hazardous situations. A teacher should never speak to or touch a pupil in a manner that could be construed as having sexual overtones or that could be interpreted as a physical assault. **It is the action rather than the intention that may subsequently give rise to problems.** One-to-one meetings between staff and a pupil of the opposite sex should be approached with great caution. If in doubt, have somebody else present, leave the door open, sit behind a desk, or let someone else know the meeting is taking place.

Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct - which will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism or sexism.

HOW DO WE PROTECT OURSELVES?

Through

- ❖ Maintaining open and unambiguous behaviour towards children – adopt safe working practices
- ❖ Respecting the rights, needs and position of children within the school
- ❖ Not condoning inappropriate behaviour in others
- ❖ Taking action to safeguard children
- ❖ Resisting favouritism

HOW DO WE PROTECT OURSELVES? continued

DO NOT

- ❖ Kiss or cuddle a young person
- ❖ Tickle or engage in other games involving physical contact
- ❖ Touch a pupil below the shoulder unless there is a justifiable reason
- ❖ Do anything of a personal nature for a pupil that they can do for themselves
- ❖ Force a pupil into a position or place
- ❖ Give a pupil a lift alone in a car unless planned and disclosed

5. Procedure for Reporting Concerns

Staff could have their suspicion or concern raised in a number of ways, the most likely of which are:

1. the conduct of a member of staff;
2. a child, parent or member of staff “disclosing” abuse;
3. bruising or evidence of physical hurt; which may or may not be accompanied by;
4. unusual behaviour by a child.

If a member of staff has such concerns they should be reported to the Child Protection Person immediately (in person or by telephone) and confirmed in writing within 24 hours. **Delay could prejudice the welfare of a child.** If the concerns relate to the conduct of a member of staff these also should be reported directly to the Child Protection Person; there is an obvious need to act immediately and with **utmost discretion**.

The Child Protection Person will consider the report and either refer this immediately (and certainly within 24 hours) to the authorities or, after taking appropriate advice (which may include discussing the circumstances on a confidential basis with Children’s Social Care or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT), decide not to refer the concerns to the authorities but keep a full record of the concerns.

6. The following information is intended to assist you if you become involved in a potential child protection situation when a child or young person makes a disclosure.

Note that this is a completely different procedure to interviewing pupils on disciplinary issues, for which we have different guidelines in this Handbook.

WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD DISCLOSES

- Listen, allow the pupil to finish without directly questioning or stopping them. Let them tell you what they want to and no more. They may need to disclose to a specialist later and too much detail now may interfere with later investigation.
- When the pupil has finished, make sure they feel secure and explain what you are going to do next.
- Write down notes, including date and time of the interview and sign the notes. Record as much as you can remember, as soon as possible (preferably immediately) afterwards, using the pupil's own words.
- Stay calm and convey this through word and action; reassure the child or young person that you are taking what they have to say seriously.
- Report to the Child Protection Person and give them the written record of the incident.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- The management of confidentiality is an essential factor in all issues relating to Child Protection.
- Staff should **never give pupils or adults an absolute guarantee of confidentiality**, but must ensure that the information is disclosed only to the people who need to know. Make sure that this is clear early on, not sprung on the pupil at the end.
- It should be explained to children and young people that secrets cannot and should not be kept if keeping them means that they, or others, will continue to be harmed.

7. AFTER DISCLOSURE

STAY CALM

Try not to transmit your anger, shock, distress, or embarrassment to the child - either verbally or through body language.

ACT AS THOUGH YOU BELIEVE IN THE CHILD

REASSURE THE CHILD

Not your fault; glad they told you etc.

ALLOW CHILD TO TALK / FINISH STORY

Don't question the child

REPORT THE INCIDENT IMMEDIATELY TO THE CHILD PROTECTION PERSON, or in his absence, the Deputy Child Protection Person or Head Master.

(Explain to the child that you will need to talk to someone in another agency whose job it is to help and protect children and that they will want to talk to the child **but offer to stay with the child and support them.**)

(See Appendix 5)

THE CHILDREN ACT 1989

The purpose of the Act is to protect the welfare of children.

Various obligations are laid upon schools (and other institutions) and their staff, which are summarised here. Schools will be regularly inspected by the newly formed inspection authority.

It is essential that all members of staff are familiar with key features of what the legislation requires, and their responsibilities.

These are set out below:

- (i) The School is required to provide pupils, staff, and parents with written statements of the following:
- the principles on which School life is based;
 - the School's sensitivity to the religious, cultural, racial and linguistic background and beliefs of children;
 - the procedures whereby pupils may raise matters of concern;
 - how an approach may be made by a pupil to the Children's Social Care Department.

The Pupil Planner, the Staff Handbook, notices published in Houses, occasional Head Master's letters to parents, and the School Prospectus variously meet these requirements.

All members of Staff (academic or in the House, personal tutors or the Chaplain, the School Doctor or the School Medical Centre Staff) are available for counsel and advice. Pupils should approach whichever adult they feel they can talk to.

It is the School's duty to publish the telephone number of the local Children's Social Care department (Somerset Direct - **0845 3459122**). If there is no one in the School they can turn to in a situation of extreme seriousness, they have the legal right to contact this number.

- (ii) Please note that at **all** levels of staff seniority we could be legally culpable if we fail to ensure that Children's Social Care and the Police are informed of a clear allegation of sexual or serious physical abuse.

We have an obligation to make sure that there is an adult or adults to whom pupils can turn when they have a serious problem, and that the pupils understand this, and know to whom they may go.

- (iii) House Staff, and particularly Boarding House Staff, have in conjunction with the Head and the Bursar a responsibility to keep under review various aspects of School life, including the following:
- the environmental health of boarders, including such matters as hygiene and provision for privacy;
 - compliance with all Safeguarding National Standards for Boarding Schools
 - the opportunity for boarding pupils over 16 to choose a School Doctor of the same sex;
 - pupils' access to telephones;
 - the keeping of records, especially of any case of a child running away from School; any complaints (e.g. from parents) about the welfare of a child, and the action taken; details of serious punishments administered (e.g. formal warning, suspension, expulsion); all non-routine letters to parents;
 - records of fire drills and practices;
 - prevention of the exploitation of one pupil by another (e.g. bullying, 'fagging').
 - The Head Master is the School Officer whose appointment the law requires as our contact with the Children's Social Care Department.

Safeguarding and ICT

Protecting young people in the online world means thinking beyond the school environment. As well as the computer to access the Internet, now many mobile phones and games consoles offer broadband connections. Pupils may be working online in school, at home or in an Internet café. Increasingly pupils will have access to personal devices not covered by network protection and therefore the emphasis needs to be on educating all users as to the risks involved and their obligation to act responsibly while online.

Safeguarding pupils in both the real and virtual world is everyone's responsibility and all staff should be aware of this policy and how to respond to e safety incidents.

All pupils should be made aware of the school's acceptable user policy and what to do if they have any ICT safeguarding concerns. Harassment, grooming of another person using technology, breaching their right to privacy, poses a serious threat to physical and emotional safety, and may have legal consequences.

Procedures for dealing with Inappropriate/Illegal Internet Access or Material

If staff or pupils discover unsuitable websites, this should be immediately reported to the DPP who in liaison with the ICT Co-ordinator for the school will consider a referral to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and the Police. Illegal material within the school's network is a very serious situation and must always be reported to the Police. Our school ensures processes are in place to minimise the risk of students gaining access to inappropriate materials, through supervision and monitoring. Any incident that involves inappropriate adult access to legal material on the school premises will be dealt with by the school's disciplinary policy.

What to do in the event of discovery of illegal material

- Seek immediate and specific advice from the DPP who will consult with the ICT co-ordinator, the Head Master and the Police.
- Prevent any further physical access to the device until the correct advice is gained.
- **Unless absolutely necessary, DO NOT remove the power from a working PC and definitely DO NOT start a PC if it is already turned off.**
- Consider if it is necessary to prevent remote access to the device.

- If you believe that a member of staff or pupil who has left the site, could remove or damage evidence on the device remotely, unplug **ONLY** the network cable from the back of the device to prevent this access from taking place.
- If the PC is already turned off and it is no longer realistically possible to prevent further physical access to the device (i.e. lack of supervision, high levels of access or an unoccupied location) **disconnect the power at the base unit (not the wall)** and remove the battery from a laptop. Store this device securely in a location where no one else can gain access to it and make a note of the date, time and name of the individual who performed this action.

Under no circumstances should the ICT co-ordinator, network manager or Head Master attempt to conduct an investigation of their own or bring in an outside expert to do so as this may compromise the evidence if a legal case were to result. In some cases this may constitute a criminal offence in itself.

Combating Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying can be defined as 'the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else'. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying: the invasion of home and personal space; the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages, the size of the audience, perceived anonymity, and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target.

Cyber-bullying takes different forms: threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyber-stalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages), vilification / defamation; exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images and manipulation.

Some cyber-bullying is clearly deliberate and aggressive, but it is important to recognise that some incidents of cyber-bullying are known to be unintentional and the result of simply not thinking about the consequences. What may be sent as a joke may not be received as one, and indeed the distance that technology allows in communication means the sender may not see the impact of the message on the receiver. There is also less opportunity for either party to resolve any misunderstanding or to feel empathy. It is important that pupils are made aware of the effects of their actions.

In cyber-bullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators, e.g. by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, or by taking part in online polls or discussion groups. They may not recognise themselves as participating in bullying, but their involvement compounds the misery for the person targeted. It is recommended that anti-bullying policies refer to those 'bystanders' — better termed 'accessories' in this context — who actively support cyber-bullying and set out sanctions for this behaviour. It is important that pupils are aware that their

actions have severe and distressing consequences, and that participating in such activity will not be tolerated.

There are particular features of cyber-bullying that differ from other forms of bullying which need to be recognised and taken into account when determining how to respond effectively. The key differences are:

- **Impact** — the scale and scope of cyber-bullying can be greater than other forms of bullying.
- **Targets and perpetrators** — the people involved may have a different profile to traditional bullies and their targets.
- **Location** — the 24/7 and any-place nature of cyber-bullying.
- **Anonymity** — the person being bullied will not always know who is attacking them.
- **Motivation** — some pupils may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying.
- **Evidence** — unlike other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying will have evidence of its occurrence.

Prevention

We seek to instil values in all members of the School, which should, ideally, preclude all bullying. These are reinforced by a PSHE programme which requires tutors at all levels of the School to spend time talking to their groups about cyber-bullying and its effects and consequences. In essence, these seek to inculcate respect for others, their property and their individuality. We hope these values underpin ordinary curricular lessons too.

It is crucial to the School's success in dealing with cyber-bullying that all members of the community are made aware that it is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of all members of the community to take action if they are aware of it happening. To remain silent is to condone the action of the bully.

Process:

Information is crucial to dealing with the problem. Those who feel that they are being bullied, or who are witnesses to what they believe is bullying/cyber-bullying, should always tell a member of staff.

Advice, support and counselling will be offered to all parties involved, and, if necessary, their parents. While recognising that both victim and bully need help, we do not adopt a 'no blame' position.

1. If a pupil receives an abusive e-mail or text, they should report the matter to a member of staff as soon as possible. A copy of the e-mail with full headers, plus dates and times should be saved. Staff will investigate all complaints of abuse and take action accordingly.

2. Depending on the nature of the allegation, the case will be taken up either by the tutor, house staff, a deputy head, DPP or a combination of these people. As a rough guide, the more serious the allegation, the more likely it is to involve senior staff and/or the Police.
3. Interviews will be conducted fairly, giving all sides the opportunity to state their case, so as to establish the truth in what seldom turn out to be straightforward issues. In all cases, pupils will be warned not to do or say anything that may prejudice their position vis-à-vis the pupil who has been bullied. (No revenge/stirring up support among friends, no taking the law into their own hands.)
4. Except for the most straightforward cases, in which truth has been established and the matter has been resolved swiftly, an interview will be conducted; a pupil would be invited to bring a friend or member of staff to support them in any such interview. This will enable a record to be kept of the interview, and what is said, to be corroborated. Notes, both rough copies and, where necessary, a brief summary and copies of any letters sent to parents will be put on files with cross referencing where appropriate.
5. Letters written to parents will detail the nature of the offence and any sanctions imposed, and will set out what improvements the School expects to be made in behaviour as well as the consequences of failure to improve. Recommendations may be made about visits to the Medical Centre and counselling for everyone involved.
6. At the conclusion of the investigation, if appropriate, one of the members of staff involved will contact parents of all pupils directly involved and inform them of action taken. Wherever possible, the identity of “informers” and pupils other than the son or daughter of the parent will not be disclosed.
7. In practice, the sanctions applied range from a verbal warning or a ban on use of the School’s computer network, to temporary or permanent exclusion, depending on the gravity of the offence and the pupil’s previous record with reference to bullying.

Sanctions

In practice, the sanctions applied range from a verbal warning or a ban on use of the School’s computer network to a temporary or permanent exclusion, depending on the gravity of the offence and the pupil’s previous record with reference to bullying / cyber-bullying. In the most severe cases, it can result in criminal prosecution.

The aim of sanctions is to:

- Help the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop.

- Hold the perpetrator to account getting them to recognise the harm caused and deter them from repeating the behaviour.
- Demonstrate to the school community that cyber-bullying is unacceptable and that the school has effective ways of dealing with it, so deterring others from behaving similarly.

When cyber-bullying is investigated, reference will be made to the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP); sanctions for breaches are set out in the AUP and the 'Procedure for dealing with Bullying/Cyber-bullying incidents'. Technology-specific sanctions for pupils engaged in cyber-bullying behaviour could include limiting Internet access for a period of time or removing the right to bring a mobile phone into school (although issues of child safety will be considered in relation to the latter).

Cyber-bullying will have an impact on the education and wellbeing of the person being bullied, and the physical location of the bully at the time of their action is irrelevant in this. Schools now have broad new powers to discipline and regulate the behaviour of pupils, even when they are off the school site. These are set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Misconduct of any kind outside of school will be amenable to school discipline if the welfare of another pupil or the culture or reputation of the school are placed at risk.

Anti-Cyber-bullying Code: Advice to pupils

Being sent an abusive or threatening text message, or seeing nasty comments about yourself on a website, can be really upsetting. This code gives you seven important tips to protect yourself and your friends from getting caught up in cyber-bullying, and advice on to how to report it when it does happen.

1. Always respect others

Remember that when you send a message to someone, you cannot see the impact that your words or images may have on the other person. That is why it is important always to show respect to people and be careful what you say online or what images you send. What you think is a joke may really hurt someone else. Always ask permission before you take a photo of someone.

If you receive a rude or nasty message or picture about someone else, do not forward it. You could be assisting a bully and even be accused of cyber-bullying yourself. You could also be breaking the law.

2. Think before you send

It is important to think before you send any images or text about yourself or someone else by email or mobile phone, or before you post information on a website. Remember that what you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever. Do you really want your teacher, parents or future employer to see that photo?

3. Treat your password like your toothbrush

Don't let anyone know your passwords. It is a good idea to change them on a regular basis. Choosing hard-to-guess passwords with symbols or numbers will help stop people hacking into your account and pretending to be you. Remember to only give your mobile number or personal website address to trusted friends.

4. Block the Bully

Most responsible websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly. Make use of these features, they are there for a reason!

5. Don't retaliate or reply

Replying to bullying messages, particularly in anger, is just what the bully wants.

6. Save the evidence

Learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. These will help you demonstrate to others what is happening and can be used by your school, internet service provider, mobile phone company, or even the police to investigate the cyber-bullying.

7. Make sure you tell

You have a right *not* to be harassed and bullied online.

There are people that can help:

- Tell an adult you trust who can help you to report it to the right place, or call a helpline like ChildLine on 0800 1111 in confidence.
- Tell the provider of the service you have been bullied on (e.g. your mobile-phone operator or social-network provider). Check their websites to see where to report.
- Tell your school. Your tutor, Housemaster / Housemistress or any member of staff will support you and can discipline the person bullying you.

Finally, don't just stand there. If you see cyber-bullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying. How would you feel if no one stood up for you?

SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL CHILDREN and YOUNG PEOPLE'S DIRECTORATE

The practice of members of the Children and Young People's Directorate is guided by their Eligibility Criteria.

1. Introduction

Teachers, who better than most, have the opportunity to witness signs of distress, emotional deprivation and significant changes in the behaviour of their pupils over a period of time, will appreciate that a fundamental problem may exist. Prompt and sensitive action, in accordance with the approved procedures, may sometimes prevent actual abuse or reduce the level of harm it if has occurred.

2. Action to be taken following concerns about abuse

The nature and degree of concern will determine the response necessary:

2.1 Investigation of Concerns about Child Abuse

There are broad categories of concern:

a) **Cases requiring immediate formal referral to Children's Social Care Department, or Police**

Immediate formal referral is required in any cases of significant physical injury, life-threatening neglect, serious threats of abuse and clear allegations or disclosures by a child or third person of child sexual abuse.

Once referral has been made, the Children's Social Care Department will initiate the approved formal procedures in collaboration with other key services.

b) **Cases requiring discussion with Children's Social Care Department or Police**

Discussion and evaluation involving the senior staff / school co-ordinator for child abuse and subsequent consultation with the Children's Social Care Department is required whenever the child shows signs of failure to thrive, general neglect, emotional abuse, compelling evidence that child sexual abuse may have occurred, or where there is a suspicion that abuse is likely to occur.

Where concerns are enhanced following this procedure, there is likely to be urgent follow up action by the Children's Social Care Department who will inform and consult with the Police on

subsequent action. A watching brief may be kept where some concerns remain, or no further action where there is a well founded alleviation of concerns.

c) **Cases requiring discussion within the School**

Discussion and evaluation involving the senior staff / school co-ordinator for child abuse is always required where a teacher's suspicion that child abuse or child sexual abuse may have occurred is based on behavioural indicators, physical signs / symptoms or information received.

The outcome will lead to an immediate confidential discussion with the Children's Social Care Department where concerns are enhanced. The Children's Social Care Department will make confidential enquiries of other agencies and professionals and report back to the school. A decision on further action will then be made.

NB In all instances when child abuse is formally investigated it will be the Children's Social Care / Police who will inform the parents of the concerns.

3. Other Issues

3.1 Records

Where there are strong and clear indications that abuse has occurred, detailed records must be kept by the Designated Lead Child Protection Person, (DPP) including all actions and communications arising from any case. Written confirmation must follow telephone messages and other personal communications.

Where suspicions are aroused but not confirmed, the DPP should devise a means of keeping appropriate records in a way which does not convey false and / or potentially damaging allegations about an individual. Particular note should be taken of the County Council's wish to make files and records as open as possible, with safeguards for highly confidential information.

3.2 Case Conference

The DPP and/or class teacher will be invited to relevant case conferences if these are convened as part of the follow up action.

Attendance at case conferences should be given high priority as an important expression of the school's duty of care to its pupils. Copies of the minutes will be forwarded to the DPP with the name of the agreed key worker.

Appropriate staff will be warned by the DPP to be alert to further evidence of abuse to a particular child or other members of the same family in the school.

3.3 Injuries requiring urgent medical attention

A school should follow the normal course of action (i.e. secure appropriate medical attention at a hospital or other medical centre). Parents should be informed that their child has been taken to a doctor, but no opinion should be offered about the cause of any injury. In such cases, the Children's Social Care Department will have been informed, as under 2.1 (b) above.

3.4 Curriculum

Schools considering the implementation of a programme of child protection related material (e.g. personal safety, stranger danger) should consult the appropriate Somerset Children's Social Care Divisional Office and Education Adviser on suitability and presentation.

4. Conclusion

Child abuse in its various forms is too serious a matter to be left to chance. A school's response must be governed by the approved procedures (www.swcpp.org.uk), which are based on two fundamental principles:

- a) that the safety of the child is paramount;
- b) that the agencies involved have all subscribed to the procedures and will co-operate fully in achieving the safety of children so affected.

- 4.1** Clearly, the identification of abuse and the remedial action, which follows, can injure relationships with parents. In spite of this, it is recognised that teachers are an important front-line group in identifying suspected, actual or potential abuse. Teachers should be able to protect their position and justify their actions by demonstrating that any action they have taken is in the interests of the child, in consultation with the key agencies, after the exercise of sound judgement in the context of these guidelines. Teachers can be assured that practice, which meets these criteria, supported by detailed records, will always receive the support of the School and the Local Authority.

Allegations Management

The definition of what an allegation is broadened significantly with the introduction of the statutory guidance Working Together 2006. Allegations now relate to all situations where a person has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

If an allegation is made against any member of school staff (including volunteers) this needs to be dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently in a way that provides protection for the child and supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Every Local Authority now has a Designated Officer for Allegations Management (LADO) who is available to provide support and advice to any organisation where staff work with children. This role also incorporates a monitoring function to ensure that all organisations work to complete allegations processes in a timescale appropriate for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator.

The Local Authority Designated Officer must be informed immediately if an allegation has been made, and they will consult as necessary with the relevant personnel in Human Resources, and other agencies such as the Police, as appropriate.

In Somerset the LADO is:

Claire Winter

CWinter@somerset.gov.uk
(01823) 355697

Useful Publications:

An overview of the framework for managing allegations against people who work with children is set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006).

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education – Chapter 5 deals with allegations of abuse and the flowchart in Appendix 5 details the safer recruitment process and gives details of the procedures and guidance on how allegations should be handled.

The South West Child Protection Procedures (www.swcpp.org.uk) also has useful guidance.

All schools should have a policy and procedures in place to address this eventuality and all staff should be aware of the steps that will be taken should they become involved in an allegation. They should also be aware of how to report concerns they may have in respect of the behaviour of any colleague. This is known as ‘Confidential Reporting’ (previously called ‘whistle blowing’) and all allegations management policies must include this.

Confidential Reporting

1. Introduction

The School has adopted this policy and the accompanying procedure on “whistleblowing” to enable members of staff to raise concerns internally and in a confidential fashion about child protection, fraud, malpractice, health and safety, criminal offences, miscarriages of justice, and failure to comply with legal obligations or unethical conduct. The policy also provides if necessary, for such concerns to be raised outside the School’s internal organisation.

2. Elements of the policy

In accordance with Lord Nolan’s Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, the School’s policy on “whistleblowing” is intended to demonstrate that the School:

- a) will not tolerate malpractice;
- b) respects the confidentiality of staff raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as is consistent with progressing the issues effectively;
- c) will provide the opportunity to raise concerns outside of the normal line management structure where this is appropriate;
- d) will invoke the School’s disciplinary policy and procedure in the case of false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations; and,
- e) will provide a clear and simple procedure for raising concerns, which is accessible to all members of staff.

Procedure

This policy is separate from the School’s adopted procedures regarding grievances. Employees should not use the “whistleblowing” procedure to raise grievances about their personal employment situation. Rather, this procedure is to enable members of staff to express a legitimate concern regarding suspected malpractice within the School including any concerns, no matter how remote or apparently unsubstantiated, related to child protection issues. Malpractice is not easily defined; however, it includes allegations of fraud, financial irregularities, corruption, bribery, dishonesty, acting contrary to the staff code of ethics, criminal

activities, or failing to comply with a legal obligation, a miscarriage of justice, or creating or ignoring a serious risk to health, safety or the environment.

Confidentiality

Employees who wish to raise a concern under this procedure are entitled to have the matter treated confidentially, and their name will not be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator of malpractice without their prior approval. It may be appropriate to preserve confidentiality that concerns are raised orally rather than in writing, although members of staff are encouraged to express their concern in writing wherever possible. If there is evidence of criminal activity then the Police will in all cases be informed.

The Investigation

Any member of staff is at liberty to express their concern to the Bursar or the Assistant Bursar. Any concern raised will be investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner, and appropriate corrective action will be pursued. The member of staff making the allegation will be kept informed of progress and, whenever possible and subject to third party rights, will be informed of the resolution. A member of staff who is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with will have a right to raise it in confidence in the first instance with the Deputy Head Master and thereafter, if the matter is not resolved, with the Head Master.

External Procedures

Where all internal procedures have been exhausted, a member of staff shall have a right of access to the Governors. It should be noted that under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, there are circumstances where a member of staff may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body where the employee reasonably believes:

- a) that exceptionally serious circumstances justify it;
- b) that the School would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence;
- c) where they believe they would be victimised by the School; or,
- d) where the Secretary of State has ordered it.

Malicious Accusations

False, malicious, vexatious or frivolous accusations will be dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

Protection from Reprisal or Victimisation

No member of the staff will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine and legitimate concern, providing that they do so in good faith and follow the "whistleblower" procedures.

The following statement is included in the Pupil Planner and posted in all Houses:

Worries And Complaints - A Pupil's Guide

This guide explains what you should do if you feel worried about something and what you may do if you wish to complain about how you are, or have been, treated. Much of what follows may seem obvious to you, but it is important for you to realise that the School will want to help you if you have a problem that is making you unhappy.

You may just wish to talk to someone or
You may wish to make a complaint.

Either way this advice will assist you to decide what to do.

“What do I do if I just want to talk to someone?”

Remember you have close friends who may be able to help, or perhaps a senior boy or girl to whom you feel you can turn. Your Housemaster or Housemistress or Tutor is always ready to help, or any other members of staff (including domestic staff) you know and to whom you feel you can comfortably talk.

There may be times when you feel you cannot talk with a member of staff. Talk, telephone or write to any of the following: -

Your parents

The School Health Centre Sister (or any of the nursing staff)

The School Doctors

A School Chaplain

A Prefect

Somerset Direct, Somerset County Council – **0845 345 9122**

Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) – **01823 363003**

Ofsted (who visit the School from time to time to inspect our provision)

– **08456 40 40 50**

Child Line - **FREEPHONE 0800 1111**

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline – **FREEPHONE 0808 800 5000**

– **FREETEXT 0800 056 0566**

Independent Listeners – (Dr and Mrs Rye) **01749 840 461**

Drink Line – **0800 917 8282**

Frank – National Drugs Helpline – **0800 776600**

Smoking Quitline – **0800 002200**

NHS Smoking Helpline – **0800 169 0169**

Somerset Eating Disorders – **01458 448600**

Victim Supportline – **0845 3030900**

Samaritans – **08457 909090**

NHS Direct – **0845 4647**